

Inspection Report

7 July 2021



Belfast Supported Living Services

Type of service: Domiciliary Care Agency
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www.rqia.org.uk

Assurance, Challenge and Improvement in Health and Social Care

Information on legislation and standards underpinning inspections can be found on our website <https://www.rqia.org.uk/>

1.0 Service information

Organisation/Registered Provider: Praxis Care Group Responsible Individual: Mr Greer Wilson	Registered Manager: Mr James Clarke – acting manager – application pending Date registered: 7 June 2021
Person in charge at the time of inspection: Manager	
Brief description of the accommodation/how the service operates: This is a domiciliary care agency supported living type which provides services up to 34 service users living in their own homes within the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) area, who require care and support with their mental ill health and learning disability. The service users are supported by 25 staff.	

2.0 Inspection summary

An unannounced inspection took place on 7 July 2021, at 09.40 to 13.00 by the care inspector.

This inspection focused on recruitment, Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC), registrations, adult safeguarding, notifications, complaints, whistleblowing, Deprivation of Liberty safeguarding (DoLS) including money and valuables, restrictive practice, monthly quality monitoring and Covid-19 guidance and we sought to assess progress with issues raised in the last quality improvement plan (QIP).

Good practice was identified in relation to recruitment and appropriate checks being undertaken before staff were supplied to service user's homes. There were good governance and management oversight systems in place. Good practice was also found in relation to system in place of disseminating Covid-19 related information to staff.

The findings of this report will provide the agency with the necessary information to assist them to fulfil their responsibilities, enhance practice and service users' experience.

3.0 How we inspect

RQIA's inspections form part of our ongoing assessment of the quality of services. Our reports reflect how they were performing at the time of our inspection, highlighting both good practice and any areas for improvement. It is the responsibility of the service provider to ensure compliance with legislation, standards and best practice, and to address any deficits identified during our inspections.

Prior to inspection we reviewed the information held by RQIA about this agency. This included the previous inspection report, QIP, notifications, concerns and any written and verbal communication received since the previous care inspection.

The inspection focused on:

- contacting the service users, their relatives, HSCT representatives and staff to find out their views on the service.
- reviewing a range of relevant documents, policies and procedures relating to the agency's governance and management arrangements.

Information was provided to service users, relatives, staff and other stakeholders to request feedback on the quality of service provided. This included questionnaires and for service users/relatives. An electronic survey was provided to enable staff to feedback to the RQIA.

4.0 What people told us about the service

We spoke with three service users, one relative and three staff.

In addition we received nine questionnaires from service users/relatives which indicated that they were happy generally with the service provided by the agency. However, a response from a service user indicated that they were 'undecided' whether the care was compassionate. As the service user had recorded their contact details, RQIA spoke to the service user on 23 July 2021. The service user did not identify any specific concerns.

No electronic feedback was received prior to the issue of the report.

Comments received during inspection process-

Service users' comments:

- "Nice people and nice staff here."
- "My family are happy I am here."
- "If I have any problems I go to staff."
- "Need more bins for rubbish."
- "Staff are helpful and caring."
- "Thanks for all the help."

Relatives comments:

- “I think the staff are very good.”
- “I am very impressed how the service has managed Covid-19.”

Staff comments:

- “All the service users have reviews face to face while social distancing.”
- “I like the opportunity to move around different areas of the agency.”
- “Management would listen to any concerns.”
- “We set up a garden group to motivate service users during Covid-19.”

5.0 The inspection**5.1 What has this service done to meet any areas for improvement identified at or since last inspection?**

The last inspection to Belfast Supported Living Services was undertaken on 1 October 2020 by a care inspector. A QIP was issued. This was approved by the care inspector and will be validated during this inspection.

Areas for improvement from the last inspection on 1 October 2020		
Action required to ensure compliance with The Domiciliary Care Agencies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007		Validation of compliance
Area for Improvement 1 Ref: Regulation 12.3 Stated: Second time	The registered person shall ensure that all mandatory training requirements are met. This relates to all mandatory training which includes first aid and personal safety training. Ref: 6.1	Met
	Action taken as confirmed during the inspection: Examination of training records confirmed that first aid and personal safety training were up to date for all staff.	

5.2 Inspection findings

5.2.1 Are there systems in place for identifying and addressing risks?

The agency's provision for the welfare, care and protection of service users was reviewed. The organisation's policy and procedures reflect information contained within the Department of Health's (DOH) regional policy 'Adult Safeguarding Prevention and Protection in Partnership' July 2015 and clearly outlines the procedure for staff in reporting concerns. The organisation has an identified Adult Safeguarding Champion (ASC). The Adult Safeguarding Position report for the agency has been formulated and was reviewed.

Discussions with the manager and staff demonstrated that they were knowledgeable in matters relating to adult safeguarding, the role of the ASC and the process for reporting adult safeguarding concerns.

It was noted that staff are required to complete classroom based adult safeguarding training during their induction programme and two yearly updates thereafter.

Staff indicated that they had a clear understanding of their responsibility in identifying and reporting any actual or suspected incidences of abuse. They could describe their role in relation to reporting poor practice and their understanding of the agency's policy and procedure with regard to whistleblowing.

The agency has a system for retaining a record of referrals made to the appropriate BHSCT in relation to adult safeguarding. Records viewed and discussions with the manager indicated that a number of adult safeguarding referrals had been made since the last inspection and that the referrals had been managed appropriately.

Service users who spoke to us stated that they had no concerns regarding their safety; they described how they could speak to staff if they had any concerns in relation to safety or the care being provided.

There were systems in place to ensure that notifiable events were investigated and reported to RQIA or other relevant bodies appropriately. It was noted that incidents had been managed in accordance with the agency's policy and procedures.

Staff have undertaken DoL's training appropriate to their job roles.

Examination of service users care records confirmed that DoLS practices were not fully embedded into practice on the day of the inspection. We established that the process had been initiated by the BHSCT representative. This will be reviewed at the next inspection.

Staff demonstrated that they have an understanding that service users who lack capacity to make decisions about aspects of their care and treatment have rights as outlined in the Mental Capacity Act.

Where a service user is experiencing a restrictive practice, examination of these care records contained details of assessments completed and agreed outcomes developed in conjunction with the appropriate BHSC representative.

The manager told us that the agency does not manage individual service users' monies.

There was a good system in place in relation to the dissemination of information relating to Covid-19 and infection prevention and control practices.

5.2.2 Is there a system in place for identifying care partners who visit service users to promote their mental health and wellbeing during Covid-19 restrictions?

The manager advised us that there were no care partners visiting service users during the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions.

5.2.3 Is there a system in place for identifying service users Dysphagia needs in partnership with the Speech and Language Therapist (SALT)?

The manager confirmed that the agency had not received any specific recommendations from the SALT in relation to service users dysphagia needs to ensure the care received in the setting was safe and effective.

5.2.4 Are there robust systems in place for staff recruitment?

The review of the agency's staff recruitment records confirmed that recruitment was managed in accordance with the regulations and minimum standards, before staff members commence employment and engage with service users. Records viewed evidenced that criminal record checks (Access NI) had been completed for staff.

A review of the records confirmed that all staff provided are appropriately registered with NISCC. Information regarding registration details and renewal dates are monitored by the manager; this system was reviewed and found to be in compliance with Regulations and Standards. Staff spoken with confirmed that they were aware of their responsibilities to keep their registrations up to date.

The manager told us that the agency does not use volunteers or voluntary workers.

5.2.5 Are there robust governance processes in place?

There were monitoring arrangements in place in compliance with Regulation 23 of The Domiciliary Care Agencies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007. Reports relating to the agency's monthly monitoring were reviewed. The process included engagement with service users, service user's relatives, staff and NHSCT representatives. The reports included details of the review of service user care records; accident/incidents; safeguarding matters; complaints; staff recruitment and training, and staffing arrangements. It was noted that an action plan was generated to address any identified areas for improvement and these were followed up on subsequent months, to ensure that identified areas had been actioned.

There is a process for recording complaints in accordance with the agency's policy and procedures. It was noted that the agency had not received any complaints since the last inspection on 1 October 2020.

Staff described their role in relation to reporting poor practice and their understanding of the agency's policy and procedure on whistleblowing.

It was established during discussions with the manager that the agency had not been involved in any Serious Adverse Incidents (SAI's) Significant Event Analysis's (SEA's) or Early Alert's (EA's).

6.0 Conclusion

Based on the inspection findings and discussions held RQIA are satisfied that this service is providing safe and effective care in a caring and compassionate manner; and that the service is well led by the manager/management team.

7.0 Quality Improvement Plan/Areas for Improvement

	Regulations	Standards
Total number of Areas for Improvement	0	0

This inspection resulted in no areas for improvement being identified. Findings of the inspection were discussed with the manager, as part of the inspection process and can be found in the main body of the report.



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